

Message Text

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10

ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-02

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IO-10 /070 W

----- 101746

R 210826Z APR 75

FM AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4898

INFO AMEMBASSY TOKYO

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

USLO PEKING

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, TW

SUBJECT: GROC ANNOUNCES PLANS TO COMMUTE PRISON SENTENCES

1. ACCORDING TO APRIL 21 PRESS REPORTS, THE ROC MINISTRY OF JUSTICE ANNOUNCED ON APRIL 20 THAT, AT THE INSTRUCTION OF PREMIER CHIANG CHING-KUO, THE GOVERNMENT PLANS TO COMMUTE THE SENTENCES OF COMMON CRIMINALS, INCLUDING POLITICAL PRISONERS, AS A WAY TO COMMEMORATE "THE LATE PRESIDENT CHIANG'S CONCERN FOR CRIMINALS." WHILE NO DETAILS OF THE PLAN ARE YET AVAILABLE, THE MINISTRY OF JUSTICE WILL REPORTEDLY HOLD A MEETING ON APRIL 21 TO DRAFT A STATUTE OF COMMUTATION. ACCORDING TO THE PRESS, ONCE THE STATUTE IS DRAFTED AND APPROVED BY THE EXECUTIVE YUAN, IT WILL BE SUBMITTED TO THE LEGISLATIVE YUAN, WHICH WILL THEN REQUEST THE PRESIDENT TO PROMULGATE IT.

2. THE PRESS FURTHER NOTES THAT THE LAST ROC COMMUTATION OF SENTENCES WAS IN OCTOBER 1971 WHEN THE GROC RELEASED 3500 PRISONERS IN COMMEMORATION OF THE ROC'S SIXTIETH ANNIVERSARY.

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3. COMMENT:

GROC PLANS TO COMMUTE PRISON SENTENCES AT THIS TIME
ARE REMINISCENT OF THE TRADITIONAL CHINESE PRACTICE OF
COMMUTING SENTENCES UPON THE ASCENSION OF A NEW EMPEROR.
THE SPEED OF THE GOVERNMENT MOVE WILL BE INTERPRETED BY
MANY AS A SIGN THAT THE PREMIER AND NEW PRESIDENT ARE FIRMLY
IN CONTROL, AND THE ACTION ITSELF IS LIKELY TO REAP FAVORABLE
RESPONSES BOTH DOMESTICALLY AND INTERNATIONALLY. UNGER

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